

Governors Island, New York Arsenal
Storehouse (Building #110)
Governors Island
New York Harbor
New York City
New York County
New York

HABS No. NY-5715-6D

HABS
NY
3-1001
60

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GOVERNORS ISLAND, NEW YORK ARSENAL, STOREHOUSE
(Building #110)

HABS No. NY-5715-6D

Location: The building is located west of the ferry slip, north off Andes Road along shore line on Governors Island, New York Harbor, New York, New York County, New York.

Present Owner: United States Coast Guard

Present Occupant: United States Coast Guard

Present Use: Offices

Significance: This structure was built as a warehouse by the Ordnance Department to relieve pressure on storage facilities caused by the accumulation of ordnance left from the Civil War.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The present building was constructed between 1870 and 1879 when it first appears on a map of that date. Sketch plans of a proposed warehouse are dated 1870. (See HABS No. NY-5715-6D data page 8).
2. Architect: Unknown. The sketch plans were signed by A.B. Dyer, Brigadier General, Chief of Ordnance from 1864 to 1874 and by W.W. Belknap, Secretary of War from 1869 to 1876.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building was owned by the War Department of the United States (renamed the Department of the Army in 1947) until 1966 when the Governors Island was transferred to the United States Coast Guard.
4. Builder: Construction was probably done by civilians under contract to the Ordnance Department.

GOVERNORS ISLAND, NEW YORK ARSENAL
STOREHOUSE
HABS No. NY-5715-6D
(Page 2)

5. Original plans and construction: The sketch plans of an ordnance store house for Governors Island dated 1870 mentioned above show outside elevations for a building similar to the present Building #110. The storehouse in the sketch was one story, supported on piers, 80' x 600'. The elevations show single arched doorways in the center of both the north and south facades and single doorways in the end. (See HABS No. NY-5715-6D data page 8).

The present building as constructed is two stories high with dimensions of 80' x 300'. It has the same roof line as the sketch plans, but windows and more door openings were added. The building is visible in an 1881 view of Governors Island. (see Beard, John. Blue Water Views of Old New York.)

6. Additions and alterations: During the 1930s, this structure underwent renovation as part of the Works Projects Administration work on the island. At this time, the exterior walls were renewed and cleaned. An external chimney was constructed on the west end. Many of the original windows were widened. (See HABS No. NY-5715-6D data pages 9-13).

Since 1938, the door openings on the lower level of the north side have been filled in with glass block or brick.

By 1955, another door had been cut through on the upper level on the south side and the utility wing on the west end had been added.

B. Historical context:

After the New York Arsenal was established by the Ordnance Department in 1833, the most acute problem was lack of proper storage space for ordnance. Expansion possibilities were limited because growth could not interfere with the firing capabilities of Fort Columbus. After the Civil War, the fortifications were acknowledged to be obsolete and buildings were constructed for the first time along the north shore of the island between the New York Arsenal and Castle Williams.

Building #110, which first appeared on a map dated 1879, represented the last expansion of the grounds for the New York Arsenal. It was built to store obsolete arms from the Civil War that had been accumulated for sale on the New York market. (S. Crispin to New York Ordnance Agency, 1878).

In 1886, the Quartermaster Corps asked permission from the Ordnance Department to use half of the structure for storage. Although this request was denied, the Quartermaster Department gained control over this structure before 1902.

During World War I, the building served as offices for the Quartermaster Department. During the 1940s, the Post Headquarters were located in it. In the 1950s, the structure was used as a print shop and offices for the finance, comptroller and personnel departments. It is now used as administrative offices and a computer center.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is an example of simple, functional army architecture that relates to the other buildings of the New York Arsenal in its scale, materials, and history.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The structure is a brick rectangular building 300' (18 bays) x 80' (5 bay ends). It is two stories high. There is a one story utility wing, 44'6" x 15'6", on the west end.
2. Foundations: The foundation is brick. Along the south side, the lower level abuts rising ground. The foundations on this side have been exposed and covered in concrete. There is a concrete retaining wall against the hillside and brick buttresses support the lower wall.
3. Walls: The walls are brick, consisting of 19 brick pillars along the north and south facades and 5 across the ends, 2'11 1/2" wide, of common bond (6 stretcher rows to 1 header row) infilled with recessed common bond brick walls. At each pillar are external metal joist supports between the upper and lower levels.

4. Structural systems, framing: The structure consists of external brick pillars supporting wood girders. The girders are supported in the interior by wood columns throughout the structure. According to US Army record drawings of the 1950s, the roof truss is a Howe truss type.
5. Porches: Along the south facade at the upper level, there are four open concrete porches with concrete steps and brick side supports and an enclosed brick and concrete entry porch.
6. Chimneys: There is an internal brick chimney capped in stone and an external stepped brick chimney located at the west end.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The openings are brick archways that have been modified to frame modern wood panel and glass doors. There are four along the south facade and one in the east end. The original doors located on the lower level of the north facade have been filled in or replaced with windows. There is a modern door cut through the west end and another modern door on the upper level of the south side.
 - b. Windows: The original windows were single six-over-six light, double-hung sash with stone lintels and sills. The shutter hardware is still intact on both sides of these windows. Other window openings have been doubled, tripled or bricked in or filled in with glass block. In the west gable ends is a semi-circular louvered opening outlined in brick and having stone sills. In the east gable end is an arched window that is now filled in.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The building has an asphalt gable roof with a parapet capped in stone. The building has recessed brick gable ends. There are metal exhaust vents in the roof line.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: There are simple wood moldings along the eaves of the north and south sides with metal gutters attached to them.

C. Description of Interior: The interior of the building has been modified as needed

1. Floor plans: The plan of the building consists of a hall which is aligned east-west through the center of the structure. Along the upper level, the offices are grouped off this hall but each group of offices is accessible by direct entry from the outside.
2. Stairways: There is a modern interior stairway between the upper and lower levels located near the second outside entrance from the east end on the upper level of the south side.
3. Flooring: The present floor covering is linoleum over concrete.
4. Wall and Ceiling finish: The outer walls are exposed and painted brick. Office partitions are generally gypsum board. The ceiling has acoustical tiling.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doors are generally wood and glass paneled doors set in wood frames.
 - b. Windows: The windows are set in simple wood frames.
6. Decorative features and trim: None visible.
7. Hardware: The hardware is modern.
8. Mechanical equipment: Heating for the structure is provided from Building #111. Air conditioning is provided from window units.
9. Original furnishings: None.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The structure faces north towards Manhattan and is one of the first buildings visible from the ferry. Although the original orientation of the structure was to the north, the south side is now the main orientation. Along the north side of the structure is an asphalt parking lot and a road that is part of the access to the ferry.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Maps and architectural drawings:

The following documents are in the Cartographic and Architectural Branch of the National Archives, Record Group 77, Maps and Plans of the Office of the Chief of Engineers.

Plan of Ordnance Store house to be built at Governors Island, 1871. Fortification File, Drawer 37, Sheet 60.

Map of Governor's Island. Surveyed by 1st Lieut. Eugene Graffin, Corps of Engineers and Frederick N. Owens Assistant Engineer, 1879. Fortification File, Drawer 37, sheet 63.

Map showing location of Water, Drain and Sewer Pipes on Governors Island. Office of the Post Quartermaster, Fort Columbus, 1879. Traced Nov. 1884. Miscellaneous Forts File, Series A, Fort Columbus.

Governors Island, 1902. Blueprint File, Governors Island, Map #10.

The following map and plans were available from Facilities Engineering, New York Support Center, Governors Island, New York, New York:

Fort Jay, Governors Island, N.Y., drawn by Lt. L.H. Rogers, S-3, 16th Infantry, Nov. 26, 1934.

US Army Record Drawings, 1950s. (Copy in HABS No. NY-5715-6D Field Records).

B. Views

View of Governors Island, print dated 1881 from Beard, John. Blue Water Views of Old New York. Barre, Massachusetts: Schrimshaw Press, 1971.

Photograph of New York Harbor, ca. 1880. The New York Historical Society.

View of Nolan Park and New York Arsenal, ca. 1909. Museum of the City of New York, Photo Library Department.

Photograph of Governors Island, ca. 1918, Governors Island Museum.

Works Program Administration photographs, Special Services, New York Support Center, Building #110, Governors Island, New York, New York.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

The following sources are located in the Navy and Old Army Branch of the National Archives, Record Group 156, Ordnance Department, Box 1003.

Inspection report of New York Arsenal, October 12, 1953, by R.S. Baker, Lt. Colonel Ordnance and Inspector.

Reports of Inspections of Rome Arsenal, Watervliet and New York Arsenal by S. Churchill, Inspector General, 14 January 1854.

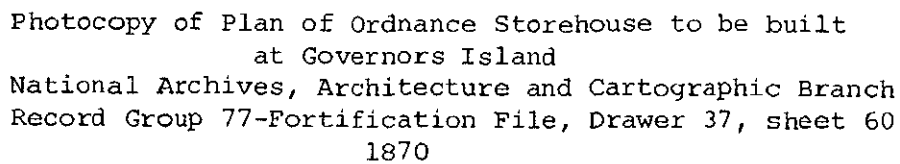
Inspection report of New York Arsenal, June 4, 1860, by Jas.W. Ripley, Lt. Colonel Ordnance and Inspector of Armories and Arsenals.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Benet, Stephen V. Ed. A Collection of Annual Reports and Other Important Papers, Relating to the Ordnance Department, 4 vols. Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1879-1890, p. 660.

Fort Jay, Governors Island, New York. A Master Plan and Program for Future Development by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1945.

National Archives, Navy and Old Army Branch. "New York Arsenal, Governors' Island". Report on History of New York Arsenal prepared for Chief of Ordnance, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., October 15, 1908.

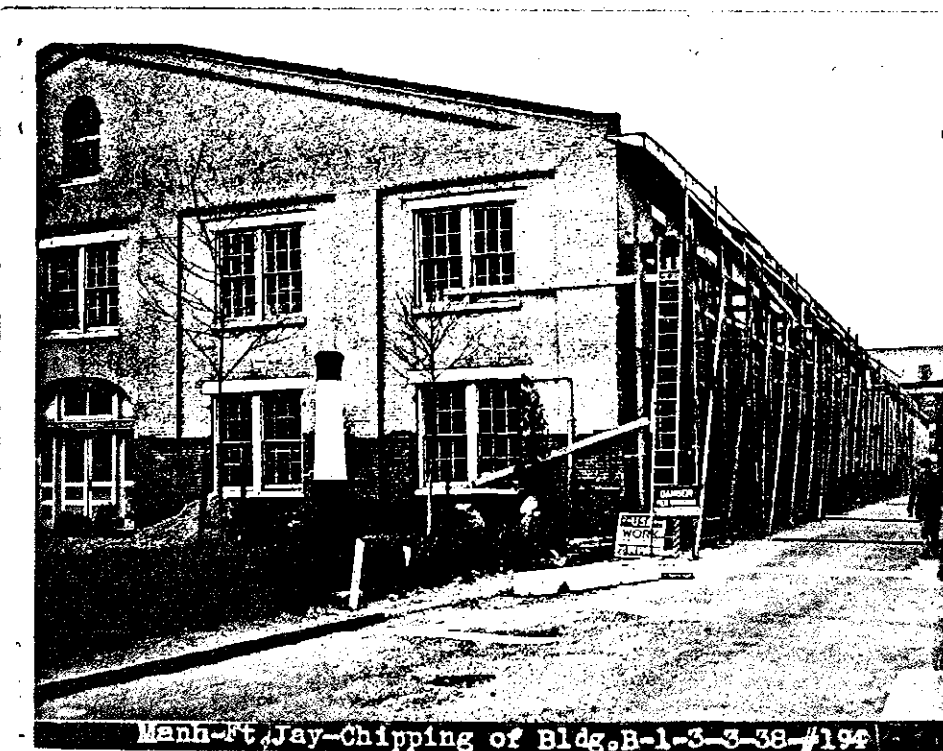




Reproduction of a Photograph of Nolan Park
Museum of City of New York, Photo Library Department
View of Nolan Park, New York Arsenal and Brick Row
Unknown Photographer, 1909



Building #140

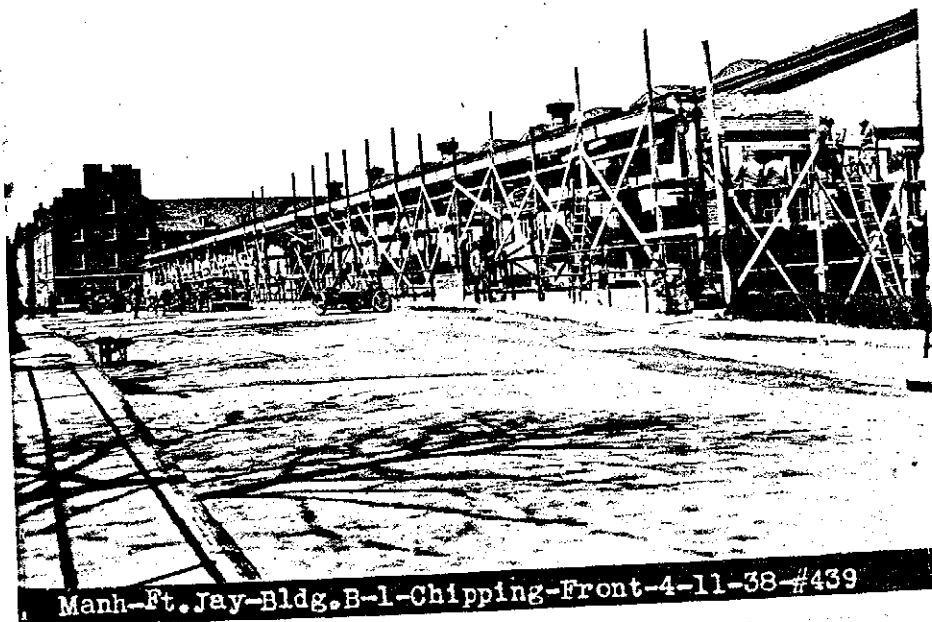


Building #110

Xerox of Photograph showing WPA work on Building #110. March 1938

MAR 38

-16-



Xerox of photographs showing WPA work on Building #110. April 1938

GOVERNORS ISLAND, NEW YORK ARSENAL
STOREHOUSE
HABS No. NY-5715-6D
(Page 12)



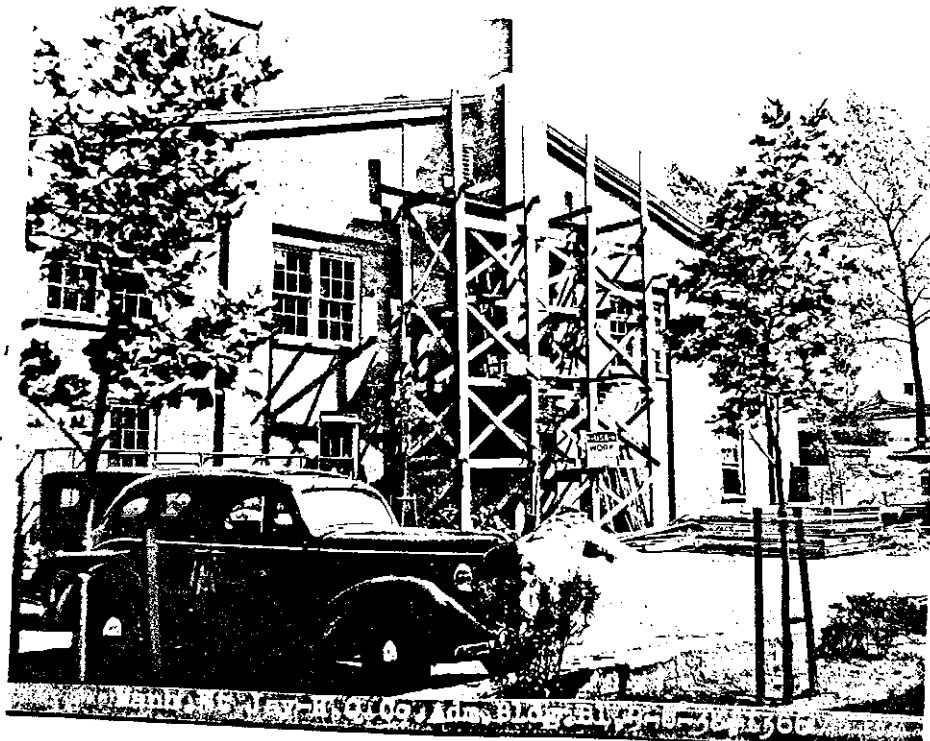
Manh. Ft. Jay-J95-Bldg. #B1-6-20-38#1005



Manh. Ft. Jay-J95-Bldg. #B-1, 8-15-38#1296

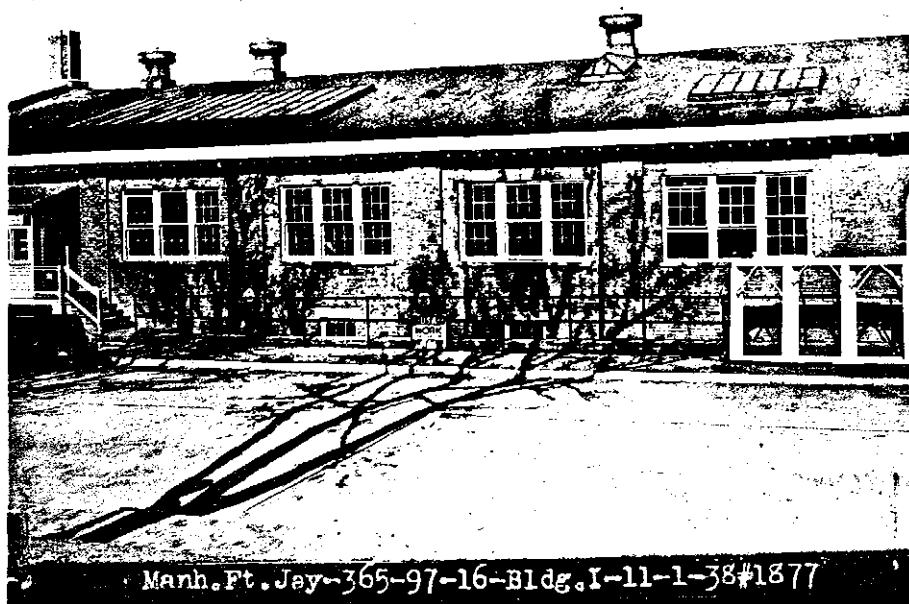
Xeroxes of photographs showing WPA work on Building #110. August 1938

15-





Building #140



Building #110

Xeroxes of photographs showing WPA work on Building #110. November 1938

NOV 38

9

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) at the request of the United States Coast Guard, Third Coast Guard District, Governors Island, New York, who funded the project. It is an addition to work accomplished during the summers of 1982 and 1983. This entailed an historic structures inventory, a National Historic Landmark District nomination and documentation of five properties which was completed in 1984. A three-volume report and inventory cards containing the results of the historic structures inventory were transmitted to the Library of Congress as field records under HABS No. NY-5715. The National Historic Landmark District nomination was submitted and acted upon favorably by the National Park System Advisory Board in October of 1984. This project is to document a select list of structures including the New York Arsenal.

Sally Kress Tompkins, Deputy Chief of HABS/HAER, was project manager. Jet Lowe, HAER staff photographer, completed the large format photography. Jay Silberman, Environmental Specialist, District Planning Office, Third Coast Guard District, Governors Island, served as manager and coordinator of the project for the U.S. Coast Guard. Katherine Grandine was project historian.